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From the Rev. W. B. SPRAGUE, D.D. *Sept.* 1839.

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A

LETTER

FROM SEP 1841 294

*****, IN LONDON,

TO HIS

FRIEND IN AMERICA,

ON THE

SUBJECT

OF THE

SLAVE-TRADE;

TOGETHER WITH

SOME EXTRACTS,

FROM APPROVED AUTHORS OF

MATTERS OF FACT,

Confirming the PRINCIPLES contained in said LETTER.

He that stealeth a Man, and selleth him, or if he be found in his hand, shall surely be put to death.

EXODUS xxi. 16.

Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them, for this is the law and the prophets.

MAT. vii. 12.

NEW-YORK:

PRINTED BY SAMUEL LOUDON,

No. 5, Water-Street. M,DCC,LXXXIV.



ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following letter was written in the year 1776, at the request of an American gentleman, who desired to know my sentiments upon the slavery of the Negroes, and professed an intention of restoring all his own to liberty, could he be convinced that duty required the sacrifice. I therefore sent him the following essay, the imperfections of which may perhaps be something extenuated by the precipitation with which it was written. It has lain by me many years in obscurity ; nor did I choose to produce it during the progress of the American contest. Since the happy termination of that disastrous war, I have shewn it to some of my particular friends, who have honoured me so far as to desire copies, and to suggest that its publication might not be untended with utility. After reflecting upon the subject, I have chosen to comply with their wishes, and present this fragment to the public ; because, whatever discredit it brings upon my head, it may contribute to establish the sincerity of my heart : And if a single human being should by my means be restored to happiness, it is an ample recompence for all the dangers I may incur as an author. Should this essay ever reach America, it may perhaps displease those who have not learned to discern friends from flatterers, and to distinguish between the language of truth and calumny. Those, on the contrary, who are enlightened by a more extensive knowledge

ledge of human nature, may perhaps respect an Englishman, who, after daring to assert their cause, through all the varied events of the late revolution, dares now with equal intrepidity assert the cause of truth and justice, and of that part of the human species whose wrongs are yet unredressed, and almost unpitied. Should it be asked why I rather publish a fragment than a complete essay, I can only answer, that I respect truth so much, that I am not inclined to violate it even as an author; and that this letter having been really written in the year 1776, and being still in the possession of the gentleman to whom it was sent, I do not choose to piece it with additions in the year 1784.

S I R,

I WAS extremely surprised at receiving a letter, in an unknown hand, which desired me to give my sentiments relative to the slavery of the Negroes; till reading to the end, I recollected the name of a gentleman, whom I had the pleasure of seeing with Mr. Laurens. Much as I am flattered by finding my opinion of any consequence with a gentleman of whom I have heard so advantageous a character, I am still more surprised, that he can ask it on such a question; a question which I am sure his own humanity and good sense will be sufficient to decide, if he attends, for a moment, to their dictates. I respect you, sir, too much to doubt the sincerity of the declaration you make, when you profess to be guided by reason and morality upon this question; for this is the only arbitration which any man can have to consult upon a subject like this: Where they are silent, the voice of the whole world ought

to be disregarded, and where they approve, the dissent of all mankind can have no influence upon a mind like yours.---But as you expressly desire to know my sentiments, I must wave both preface and ceremony, and address you with the modest freedom that becomes one man when he is speaking to another upon the most important question in the universe. As a member of that society which has now made a solemn appeal to Heaven, and taken up arms against the nation to which it owes its establishment, you must admit that there are such things as right and justice, to which the whole human species have an indefeasible claim. Indeed, unless there be such a thing as justice, it is in vain we enquire about its precepts, or refer to its arbitration. He that admits no right but force, no justice but superior violence, arms every man against himself, and justifies all excesses. If it be lawful to injure because we can ; if we may seize the property of another, insult his person, or force him to labour for our luxury or caprice, merely because he is weaker ; this principle will be equally fatal to ourselves, when fortune shall strip us of that power which is our only prerogative, and shift the plea of superiority. You are to remember that, upon this supposition, your slaves, the instant they shall become the strongest, will have a right to the services of yourself and every other gentleman of the southern colonies ; will have a right to force you to labour naked in the sun to the music of whips and chains ; to rob you of every thing which is now dear to your indolence, or necessary to your pleasures ; to goad you to every species of servile drudgery, and punish you for their amusement and caprice ; will have a right to exhaust your youth in servitude, and to abandon your age to wretchedness and diseases : In one word, sir, they will

will have a right to use YOU, as you do THEM. Let us, therefore, leave principles which can be maintained by no one but a professed enemy to mankind ; who would at one stroke extirpate every thing which alleviates the evils of life, and arm every man in an eternal war against his fellow creatures, to enquire what are the real dictates of that justice, whose existence, I am persuaded, we both allow. You, therefore, admit there are certain claims, which, for want of a better name, we call rights, to which the human species has an indisputable title. To express myself in other words, " There is a method of pursuing our own happiness in such a manner, that we may promote the general good at the same time ; or, at least not interfere with it." This, our reason assures us, is the privilege of every created being ; and while he confines himself within these bounds, we feel the most cordial approbation of his conduct. We love, and esteem, and sympathize with him, from the very constitution of our nature. On the contrary, whenever any one disturbs or injures a being acting in this manner, or prevents him from attaining the good to which he is impelled, we feel our hatred and indignation most forcibly excited against the aggressor. We consider such a character as armed against the welfare of the world, and as one who is endeavouring to make the common good subservient to his own selfishness. I appeal to the generosity of your own nature, for the existence of these principles. Have they not, a thousand times, animated you to acts of virtue and humanity, as well as inspired you with an involuntary reverence for all who acted from their impulse ? Have they not often pleaded the cause of the wretch that lay trembling and defenceless at your feet, and, in spite of the prejudices of your country and education, whispered to
your

your mind that one human being ought not to hold his existence by the tenure of another's will ?

Do not these principles now inspire you, and frequently impel you beyond the bounds of prudence and safety, while what you call your country's cause animates you to exertion ? But this cause is only the united cause and interest of every particular man ; those rights which the Great Creator taught him to discover when he gave him reason, which he urges him to defend by passion, and which a mind like yours prizes beyond the gratifications of sense, and dares to grasp at even while it is perishing. This appears to me to be a plain and concise deduction of morality, which means nothing more than that method or rule of conduct by which the whole human species may attain the greatest possible degree of happiness. And I rather choose to express myself so, because I thus comprehend all sects and opinions. The religious man allows that the happiness of the species is the great end of the Deity, which he promotes by the rewards and punishments of a future state : The disciple of Shaftsbury understands this, when he talks of the beauty of virtue and the love of order ; and even the gloomy pupil of Hobbes, who resolves every thing into self interest, must allow the existence of moral distinctions, so far as they influence the welfare of the species. This universal morality appears to me to be the only rational and legal foundation of all human government ; which ought to be nothing more than the application of this general rule to particular societies, and the enforcing it by civil establishments. If, therefore, it be granted, that the rights of a nation are nothing more than the rights of every man in it, and that all just and legal authority supposes a delegated power entrusted solely for
the

the purpose of promoting the general good; it will appear evident that every individual in the universe possesses certain rights, which no man can divest him of without injustice, unless he be guilty of some crime against society which exposes him to its vengeance. Hence it follows, that whenever any nation attacks the rights and happiness of another nation, it deserves to find its own destruction in the attempt; and whenever any individual presumes to exercise this species of authority over his fellow creatures, he must be a tyrant and an oppressor, whom it is permitted to destroy by every possible method. Whoever would deny this, must either deny the existence of right and justice entirely, and then it is in vain to argue; or must shew some natural distinction by which one part of the species is entitled to privileges from which the other is excluded. The first supposition I have already considered, and the second is altogether absurd; for all alterations and distinctions among mankind solely arise from civil government, which has no other just foundation than natural right; and natural right, for that reason, must be a principle of higher authority than civil government. Whenever, therefore, civil government tends to destroy and confound the rights of nature, it ceases to have any claim to our obedience; it becomes tyranny, corruption, despotism, a pest instead of a blessing, and subversive of every purpose for which it was instituted, or ought to be continued.

I am extremely fearful of expressing myself obscurely upon so abstract a subject, and must, therefore, though with the hazard of prolixity, attempt to place it in a different light.---If you imagine any number of the human species assembled in some particular part of the globe, without any form of government established among them; it is evident,
that

that these individuals may either live together in such a manner as to produce mutual comfort and assistance, or may be the cause of continual misery to each other. No proposition in the mathematics can be investigated with more precision than the methods of conduct which have these contrary tendencies. Every disposition which inclines one man to assist another, or to avoid giving him offence and doing him injury, must necessarily contribute to the common welfare; which would be perfect, were these dispositions cultivated in the greatest possible degree. On the contrary, every disposition, which, either by fraud or violence, tends to interrupt the personal security of individuals, or to deprive them of those things which they have acquired by their industry, is detrimental to the sum of happiness, and would, if carried to the greatest possible degree, entirely destroy that part of the species.---In this view of things, morality arises from necessity, and comprehends "certain rules of conduct founded upon the relations which beings endowed with particular faculties bear to each other; which rules, when properly observed, produce happiness to society; but when violated or neglected, as necessarily occasion misery, as fire or pointed substances excite pain, when they act too forcibly upon the nerves."

I hardly think that the greatest sceptic will deny these distinctions founded upon facts as certain as the impression of any material substance upon our senses. If we, now, proceed a little farther, we shall find that the dispositions which produce these different kinds of conduct are by the moralists expressed by different names, and enforced by different motives, according to their several systems; while natural religion adds its sanctions, and inclines us

to believe that the Deity himself, who has displayed so great an attention to the happiness and preservation of his creatures here, may extend his benevolence to another stage of existence, and compensate the evils sometimes unmeritedly suffered below. But if we admit the evidence of revealed religion, the scheme of human things is perfect as it is august; the clouds which overshadowed our horizon are dissipated, and the gradual progress of triumphant virtue, through dangers and difficulties, to eternal happiness, is displayed and ascertained.

Having laid down these principles, it is easy to apply them to the particular case in question. Slavery is the absolute dependance of one man upon another; and is, therefore, as inconsistent with all ideas of justice, as despotism is with the rights of nature. It is a crime so monstrous against the human species, that all those who practise it deserve to be extirpated from the earth. It is no little indirect attack upon the safety and happiness of our fellow creatures, but one that boldly strikes at the foundations of all humanity and justice. Robbers invade the property, and murderers the life of human beings; but he that holds another man in bondage, subjects the whole sum of his existence to oppression, bereaves him of every hope, and is, therefore, more detestable than robber and assassin combined. But if no one who has common feeling will commit the outrage, no one who has common sense will attempt to justify it by argument; since it would involve him in the grossest and most inextricable contradictions. He must allow that every man has, by nature, a right to life, yet that every other man has a right to rob him of it; that every man has an equal right to subsistence, yet that every other may deprive him of all the means; and that while every individual

dual is justified by nature and the Deity in pursuing his own happiness by all innocent methods, every other individual is equally justified in making him miserable. In short, it is reducing every thing to the state before described, a state of contest and desolation from which right and justice are equally excluded.

Of you, sir, who say you have several slaves, I beg leave to ask what are the rights you claim over them? Have you a right to torture them when they are guilty of no faults? Have you a right to kill them for your diversion? Is your power circumscribed by no bounds, and are there particular beings who bring into the world all the rights which you yourself can pretend to, but have so entirely lost them by being transported into another country, as to be beyond the protection both of nature and of nature's God?

Surely, sir, unless I am deceived in you, you are a man both of honour and humanity. You start at the idea of wanton and unprovoked barbarity. You would not murder a slave to shew your dexterity, nor maim him to prove your strength; you would not dash an infant upon the ground to feed your dogs, even tho' he was black; nor would you rip up the belly of his mother while she was suckling him, to improve your skill in anatomy. You neither would, nor dare you commit actions like these; you feel that you have no right to do them; or, if you have, that every other man has an equal and superiour right to destroy you like a beast of prey. What then are your rights? I anticipate your answer: You will feed and cloath your negroes, you will treat them with humanity and tenderness, and then you have a right to moderate advantage from their labors. All this, sir, is well; and could I conceive

ceive that you ever had acted in another manner, I should never have troubled you with this tedious letter. While your negroes choose to stay with you upon these terms, this is a fair and equitable compact. But what if they should choose to leave you, will you let them go? If you do, you are a man of honor, sense, and humanity; but I fear no West Indian.

Are there no whips, no gibbets, no punishments more dreadful than death itself for contumacious slaves? And what is this but claiming the detestable power I have mentioned above, that of making other beings miserable, for your interest or amusement? Who, sir, gave you a title to their labours, or a right to confine them to loathsome drudgery? And if you have no right to this, what are the punishments you pretend to inflict but so many additional outrages? Has a robber a claim upon your life because you withhold your property; or a ravisher a right to a woman's blood because she defends her chastity? Either then prove your right to their labours, or acknowledge that the punishments inflicted upon fugitive slaves are a flagitious insult upon justice, humanity and common sense.

Permit me, here, to examine for a moment the nature of the title by which you claim an irredeemable property in the labours of your fellow creatures.---A wretch, devoid of compassion and understanding, who calls himself a king of some part of Africa, which suffers the calamity of being frequented by the Europeans, seizes his innocent subjects, or engages in an unnecessary war to furnish himself with prisoners; these are loaded with chains, torn from all their comforts and connections, and driven (like beasts to the slaughter house) down to the sea shore, where the mild subjects of a Christian government

government and a religious king are waiting to agree for the purchase, and to transport them to America. They are then thrust by hundreds into the infectious hold of a ship, in which the greatest part frequently perishes by disease, while the rest are reserved to experience the candor and humanity of American patriots---If you have never yet considered it, pause here for a moment, and endeavour to impress upon your mind the feelings of a being full as sensible, and perhaps more innocent than you or I, which is thus torn in an instant from every thing that makes life agreeable ; from country, friends and parents ; from the intercourse of mutual affection with consort, lover, or child ; which, possessed of feelings more exquisite than European hearts can conceive, is separated for ever from all it loves ; that, reduced to a depth of misery, which, even in the midst of freedom and affluence, would be sufficient to overwhelm the most hardened disposition, instead of friends and comforters, and obsequious attendants, sees itself surrounded with unrelenting persecutors and un pitying enemies ; wretches, who by long intercourse with misery, are grown callous to its agonies ; who answer tears with taunts, and complaints with torture ! I shudder at the horrors which I describe, and blush to be a human creature ! Yet these are not the colours of description, but a recital of facts less strong than the reality. Can any man reflect upon these things, without unutterable remorse, Can he know that, perhaps, while he is wallowing in luxury and sensuality, there are beings whose existence he has embittered, mothers shrieking for their children, and children perishing for want of their mothers care ; wretches who are frantic with rage, shame and desperation, or pining in all the agonies of slow and painful death, who might have been

been at peace if he had never existed ? Can any man know this and hope for mercy, either from his fellow creatures or his God ?--

After the arrival of the surviving wretches in America, you well know in what manner they are transferred to their conscientious masters---how they are brought to the market, naked, weeping, and in chains---how one man dares to examine his fellow creatures as he would do beasts, and bargain for their persons---how all the most sacred duties, affections, and feelings of the human heart, are violated and insulted ; and thus you dare to call yourselves the masters of wretches whom you have acquired by fraud, and retain by violence !--While I am tracing this practice, which you and every man who has been in the islands or the southern colonies of America, knows to be true, my astonishment exceeds even my horror, to find it possible that any one should seriously doubt whether an equitable title to hold human beings in bondage can be thus acquired.

With what face, sir, can he who has never respected the rights of nature in another, pretend to claim them in his own favour ? How dare the inhabitants of the southern colonies speak of privileges and justice ? Is money of so much more importance than life ? Or have the Americans shared the dispensing power of St. Peter's successors, to excuse their own observance of those rules which they impose on others ? If there be an object truly ridiculous in nature, it is an American patriot, signing resolutions of independency with the one hand, and with the other brandishing a whip over his affrighted slaves.

If men would be consistent, they must admit all the consequences of their own principles ; and you and your countrymen are reduced to the dilemma of either acknowledging the rights of your negroes,

or

or of surrendering your own.---If there be certain natural and universal rights, as the declarations of your Congress so repeatedly affirm, I wonder how the unfortunate Africans have incurred their forfeiture.---Is it the antiquity, or the virtues, or the great qualities of the English Americans, which constitutes the difference, and entitles them to rights from which they totally exclude more than a fourth part of the species?--Or do you choose to make use of that argument, which the great Montesquieu has thrown out as the severest ridicule, that they are black and you white; that you have lank, long hair, while theirs is short and woolly?

The more attentively you consider this subject, the more clearly you will perceive, that every plea, which can be advanced upon it, is the plea of interest and tyranny, combating humanity and truth. You cannot hide from yourself, that every title you can alledge, must be a title founded upon fraud or violence, and supported by open and avowed injustice. Can any thing be clearer, than that a man who is born free can never forfeit his inheritance by suffering oppression; and that it is a contradiction to urge a purchase of what no one has a right to sell? Nor does it make any difference, whether the unfortunate victim pass from one to another, or from one to a thousand masters, any more than whether a nation be enslaved by a first or by an hundredth tyrant. There can be no prescription pleaded against truth and justice; and the continuance of the evil is so far from justifying, that it is an exaggeration of the crime. What would you say to a man in private life, who should pretend to be no thief, because he only bought stolen goods; or that he was no villain, because he did not forge a deed himself, but only paid another to do it, and enjoyed the estate

state by that honorable security ? Yet this is literally the title which the Americans plead to the unfortunate inhabitants of Africa. You do not go to Africa to buy or steal your negroes ; perhaps, because you are too lazy and luxurious : but you encourage an infamous, pitiless race of men to do it for you, and conscientiously receive the fruits of their crimes. You do not, merciful men, reduce your fellow creatures to servitude ! No, men of your independent spirits, that have taken up arms against the government that had protected and established them, rather than pay a tax of three pence ; that have laid the axe to the root of all human authority, and instead of drinking the bitter waters of civil abuses and prescriptive obedience, have ascended to the living fountains of truth, justice and nature, would never make flagitious attempts upon the liberties and happiness of their brethren ! Yes, gentlemen, men of liberal minds like yours, acknowledge all mankind to be their equals. Leave hereditary tyrants and their flatterers to make distinctions unknown to nature, and to degrade one part of the species to brutes, while they equal the other with gods !---You know that this is the greatest of all corruptions, and as such you detest it.--What ! are not all men naturally equal ? And are not all civil distinctions, when legitimate the permission of the people, and consequently subordinate to their power and controul ? Did you not carry the rights of men into the uncultivated desert and the howling wilderness ? Not of Frenchmen, nor of Germans, nor of Englishmen, but of men ;---men, the first and supreme distinction, who, created for freedom and happiness, transport to every soil the inherent prerogatives of their nature.

“ Rome n’est plus dans Rome, elle est par tout ou je suis. Yes,

Yes, gentlemen, as you are no longer Englishmen, I hope you will please to be men ; and, as such, admit the whole human species to a participation of your unalienable rights. You will not, therefore, drag a trembling wretch from his cottage and his family ; you will not tear the child from the arms of his frantic mother, that they may drag on a loathsome existence in misery and chains ; you will not make depredations upon your unoffending neighbours, and, after having spread desolation over a fertile country, reduce the innocent inhabitants to servitude. To do this, you must be monsters, worse, I fear, than the majority of the House of Commons and the English Ministry*. But you are men tremblingly alive to all the rights and feelings of the kind, and I believe some of you at least are Christians. Your worst actions, therefore, the greatest crimes which even your enemies can object, are only that you are the voluntary causes of all these mischiefs ? -- You, you encourage the English pirate to violate the laws of faith and hospitality, and stimulate him to new excesses by purchasing the fruits of his rapine. Your avarice is the torch of treachery and civil war, which desolates the shores of Africa, and shakes destruction on half the majestic species of man !

* Should this doubt appear absurd, the reader is desired to remember it was written in the year 1776.

In confirmation of the doctrines and principles contained in the preceding letter. The following extracts from approved authors, among many others that might be mentioned are selected; by which it will clearly appear, how happy these Africans live in their own country—blessed with good understandings—a fertile and pleasant land;—and how many wars, and how much cruelty is practised amongst them, purely from the trade which the whites carry on with them.

M. ADANSON, in his account of Goree and Senegal, in the year 1754, says, “ Which way soever I turned my eyes on this pleasant spot, I beheld a perfect image of pure nature; an agreeable solitude, bounded on every side by charming landscapes, the rural situation of cottages in the midst of trees; the ease and indolence of the negroes reclined under the shade of their spreading foliage; the simplicity of their dress and manners; the whole revived in my mind the idea of our first parents, and I seemed to contemplate the world in its primitive state: they are, generally speaking, very good-natured, sociable and obliging. I was not a little pleased with this my first reception; it convinced me, that there ought to be a considerable abatement made in the accounts I had read and heard every where of the savage character of the Africans. I observed, both in negroes and Moors, great humanity and sociableness, which gave me strong hopes, that I should be very safe amongst them, and meet with the success I desired, in my enquiries after the curiosities of the country.”

William Bosman, a principal factor for the Dutch, who resided sixteen years in Guinea, speaking of the natives of that part, where he then was, says,

says, " They are generally a good sort of people, " honest in their dealings;" others he describes as " being generally friendly to strangers, of a mild conversation, affable and easy to be overcome with reason." He adds, " That some negroes, who have " had an agreeable education, have manifested a " brightness of understanding equal to any of us." Speaking of the fruitfulness of the country, he says, " It was very populous, plentifully provided with " corn, potatoes and fruit, which grew close to each " other; in some places a foot-path is the only " ground that is not covered with them; the negroes leaving no place, which is thought fertile, " uncultivated; and immediately after they have " reaped, they are sure to sow again." Other parts he describes, as, " being full of towns and villages; " the soil very rich, and so well cultivated as to " look like an entire garden, abounding in rice, " corn, oxen and poultry, and the inhabitants laborious."

William Smith, who was sent by the African Company to visit their settlements on the coast of Guinea, in the year 1726, gives much the same account of the country of Delmina and Cape Corse, &c. for beauty and goodness, and adds, " The more you " come downward towards that part, called Slave-Coast, the more delightful and rich the soil appears." Speaking of their disposition, he says, " They were a civil, good natured people, industrious " to the last degree. It is easy to perceive what " happy memories they are blessed with, and how " great progress they would make in the science, " in case their genius was cultivated with study." He adds, from the information he received of one of the Factors, who had resided ten years in that country, " That the discerning natives account it their " greatest

“ greatest unhappiness, that they were ever visited
 “ by the Europeans.---That the Christians introduced
 “ the traffick of slaves; and that before our
 “ coming they lived in peace.”

Andrew Brue, a principal man in the French Factory, in the account he gives of the great river Senegal, which runs many hundred miles up the country, tells his readers, “ The farther you go from the
 “ sea, the country on the river seems more fruitful
 “ and well improved. It abounds in Guinea and
 “ Indian corn, rice, pulse, tobacco, and indigo.
 “ Here are vast meadows, which feed large herds
 “ of great and small cattle; poultry are numerous,
 “ as well as wild fowl.” The same author, in his travels to the south of the river Gambia, expresses his surprize, “ To see the land so well cultivated;
 “ scarce a spot lay unimproved; the low grounds
 “ divided by small canals, were all sowed with rice;
 “ the higher ground planted with Indian corn, millet, and pease of different sorts, beef and mutton
 “ very cheap, as well as all other necessaries of life.” The account that this author gives of the disposition of the natives, is, “ That they are generally good-natured and civil, and may be brought to any
 “ thing by fair and soft means.” Artus, speaking of the same people, says, They are a sincere, inoffensive people, and do no injustice either to one
 “ another or strangers.”

Francis Moor, Factor to the African company on the river Gambia, relates, “ That when the
 “ king of Barfalli wants goods, &c. he sends a messenger to the English governor at James’ fort, to
 “ desire he would send up a sloop with a cargo of
 “ goods, which (says the author) the governor
 “ never fails to do; against the time the vessel arrives, the king plunders some of his enemies
 “ towns,

“ towns, selling the people for such goods as he
 “ he wants.---If he is not at war with any neigh-
 “ bouring king, he falls upon one of his own
 “ towns, and makes bold to sell his own miserable
 “ subjects.”

N. Brue, in his account of the trade, &c. writes,
 “ That having received a quantity of goods, he
 “ wrote to the king of the country, that if he had
 “ a sufficient number of slaves, he was ready to
 “ trade with him. This Prince, (says that author)
 “ as well as other negro monarchs, has al-
 “ ways a sure way of supplying his deficiencies
 “ by selling his own subjects.---The king had re-
 “ course to this method, by seizing three hundred
 “ of his own people, and sent word to Brue, that
 “ he had the slaves ready to deliver for the goods.”

The misery and bloodshed, consequent of the
 slave-trade, is amply set forth by the following ex-
 tracts of two voyages to the coast of Guinea for
 slaves. The first in a vessel from Liverpool, taken
 verbatim from the original manuscript of the sur-
 geons journal, viz.

“ Sestro, December the 29th, 1724. No trade
 “ to-day, though many traders come on board,
 “ they inform us, that the people are gone to war
 “ within land, and will bring prisoners enough in
 “ two or three days; in hopes of which we stay.

“ The 30th. No trade yet, but our traders came
 “ on board to-day, and informed us, the people had
 “ burnt four towns of their enemies, so that to-
 “ morrow we expect slaves off. Another large ship
 “ is come in: yesterday came in a large Londoner.

“ The 31st. Fair weather, but no trade yet; we
 “ see each night towns burning; but we hear
 “ the Sestro men are many of them killed by the in-
 “ land negroes, so that we fear this war will be un-
 “ successful.

“ The

“ The 2d January. Last night we saw a prodigious fire break out about eleven o’clock, and this morning we see the town of Sestro burnt down to the ground, (it contained some hundreds of houses) so that we find their enemies are too hard for them at present, and consequently our trade spoiled here; so that about seven o’clock we weighed anchor, as did likewise the three other vessels to proceed lower down.”

The second relation, also taken from the original manuscript journal of a person of credit, who went surgeon on the same account, in a vessel from New-York to the coast of Guinea, about eighteen years past, is as follows, viz. “ Being on the coast at a place called Basalia, the commander of the vessel, according to custom, sent a person on shore with a present to the king, acquainting him with his arrival, and letting him know, they wanted a cargo of slaves. The king promised to furnish them with slaves, and in order to do it, set out to go to war against his enemies, designing also to surprize some town, and take all the people prisoners. Sometime after, the king sent them word, he had not yet met with the desired success, having been twice repulsed, in attempting to break up two towns; but that he still hoped to procure a number of slaves for them; and in this design he persisted till he met his enemies in the field, where a battle was fought, which lasted three days, during which time the engagement was so bloody, that four thousand five hundred men were slain on the spot.” The person, that wrote the account, beheld the bodies as they lay on the field of battle. “ Think (says he in his journal) what a pitiable sight it was, to see the widows weeping over their lost husbands, orphans deploring the loss of their fathers, &c. &c.”

The

The following substance of an address or expostulation made by a sensible author, to the several ranks of persons most immediately concerned in the trade, is now republished.

“ And first, to the captains employed in this trade. Most of you know the country of Guinea, perhaps now by your means, part of it is become a dreary uncultivated wilderness; the inhabitants being murdered or carried away, so that there are few left to till the ground; but you know, or have heard, how populous, how fruitful, how pleasant it was a few years ago. You know the people were not stupid; not wanting in sense, considering the few means of improvement they enjoyed. Neither did you find them savage, treacherous, or unkind to strangers. On the contrary, they were in most parts a sensible and ingenious people; kind and friendly, and generally just in their dealings. Such are the men whom you hire their own countrymen to tear away from this lovely country; part by stealth, part by force, part made captives in those wars which you raise or foment on purpose. You have seen them torn away, children from their parents, parents from their children: Husbands from their wives, wives from their beloved husbands; brethren and sisters from each other. You have dragged them who had never done you any wrong, perhaps in chains, from their native shore. You have forced them into your ships, like an herd of swine, * them who

* *The following relation is inserted at the request of the author.*

“ That I may contribute all in my power towards the good of mankind, by inspiring any of its individuals with a suitable abhorrence for that detestable practice of trading in our fellow creatures, and in some measure atone for my neglect of duty as a christian, in engaging in a wicked traffic, I offer to their serious consideration, some few occurrences of which I was an eye witness. That being struck with the wretched and affecting scene they may foster
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who had souls immortal as your own. You have stowed them together as close as ever they could lie, without any regard to decency or conveniency--And when many of them had been poisoned by foul air, or had sunk under various hardships, "you have seen their remains delivered to the deep, till the sea should give up his dead." You have carried the survivors into the vilest slavery, never to end but with life: Such slavery as is not found among the Turks at Algiers, no, nor among the heathens in America,

May I speak plainly to you? I must. Love constrains me: Love to you, as well as those you are concerned with. Is there a God? You know there is. Is he a just God? Then there must be a state of retribution; A state wherein the just God will reward every man according to his work. Then what reward will he render to you. O think sometimes! before you drop into eternity: Think how, "He shall have judgment without mercy, that shewed no mercy." Are you a man? Then you should

"that humane principle, which is the noble and distinguished characteristic of man."

About the year 1749, I sailed from Liverpool to the coast of Guinea; some time after our arrival, I was ordered to go up the country a considerable distance, upon having notice from one of the negro kings, that he had a parcel of slaves to dispose of, I received my instructions and went, carrying with me an account of such goods we had on board, to exchange for the slaves we intended to purchase; upon being introduced, I presented him with a small case of spirits, a gun and some trifles, which having accepted, and understood by an interpreter what goods we had, the next day was appointed for viewing the slaves; we found about two hundred confined in one place. But here, how shall I relate the affecting sight I there beheld, the silent sorrow which appeared in the countenance of the afflicted father, and the painful anguish of the tender mother, expecting to be forever separated from their tender offspring; the distressed maid wringing her hands in preface of her future wretchedness, and the general cry of the innocent, from a fearful apprehension of the perpetual slavery to which they were doomed. I purchased eleven, who I conducted, tied two and two;

should have a human heart. But have you indeed? What is your heart made of? Is there no such principles as compassion there? Do you never feel another's pain? Have you no sympathy? No sense of human woe? No pity for the miserable? When you saw the flowing eyes, the heaving breast, or the bleeding sides and tortured limbs of your fellow-creatures. Was you a stone or a brute? Did you look upon them with the eyes of a tyger? When you squeezed the agonizing creatures down in the ship, or when you threw their poor mangled remains into the sea, had you no relentings? Did not one tear drop from your eye, one sigh escape from your breast? Do you feel no relenting now? If you do not, you must go on till the measure of your iniquities is full. Then will the great God deal with you, as you have dealt with them, and require all their blood at your hands. And at that day it shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah

to our ship. Being but a small vessel (ninety ton) we soon purchased our cargo, consisting of one hundred and seventy slaves, whom thou may'st reader range in thy view, as they were shackled two and two together, pent up within the narrow confines of the main deck, with the complicated distress of sickness, chains and contempt; deprived of every fond and social tie, and in a great measure reduced to a state of desperation. We had not been a fortnight at sea, before the fatal consequence of this despair appeared; they formed a design of recovering their natural right, liberty, by raising and murdering every man on board; but the goodness of the Almighty rendered their scheme abortive, and his mercy spared us to have time to repent: The plot was discovered; the ring-leader tied by the two thumbs over the barricado door, at sun rise received a number of lashes; in this situation he remained till sun set, exposed to the insults and barbarity of the brutal crew of sailors, with full leave to exercise their cruelty at pleasure: The consequence was, the next morning the miserable sufferer was found dead, fixed from the shoulders to the waist. The next victim was a youth, who from too strong a sense of his misery refused nourishment and died disregarded and unnoticed till the hogs had fed on part of his flesh.

morrah than for you : But if your heart does relent; though in a small degree, know it is a call from the God of love. And to day, if you hear his voice, harden not your heart---To-day resolve, God being your helper to escape for your life---Regard not money : All that a man hath will he give for his life. Whatever you lose, lose not your soul ; nothing can countervail that loss. Immediately quit the horrid trade : At all events be an honest man.

This equally concerns every merchant who is engaged in the slave-trade. It is you that induce the African villain to sell his countrymen ; and in order thereto, to steal, rob, murder men, women and children without number : by enabling the English villain to pay him for so doing ; whom you over pay for his execrable labour. It is your money, that is the spring of all, that impowers him to go on ; so that whatever he or the African does in this matter, is all your act and deed. And is your conscience quite reconciled to this ? Does it never reproach you at all ? Has gold entirely blinded your eyes and stupified your heart ? Can you see, can you feel no harm therein ? Is it doing as you would be done to ? Make the case your own. “ Master (said a slave at Liverpool to the merchant that owned him) what if “ some of my countrymen were to come here, and “ take away my mistress, and master Tommy and “ master Billy, and carry them into our country “ and make them slaves, how would you like it ?” His answer was worthy of a man : “ I will never “ buy a slave more while I live.” O let his resolution be yours ! Have no more any part in this detestable business. Instantly leave it to those unfeeling wretches, “ who laugh at humanity and compassion.”

And

And this equally concerns every person who has an estate in our American plantations : Yea, all slave-holders of whatever rank and degree ; seeing men-buyers are exactly on a level with men-stealers. Indeed, you say, “ I pay honestly for my goods ; “ and I am not concerned to know how they are “ come by.” Nay but you are : You are deeply concerned, to know that they are not stolen : Otherwise you are partaker with a thief, and are not a jot honefter than him. But you know they are not honestly come by : You know they are procured by means nothing near so innocent as picking of pockets, house-breaking, or robbery upon the highway. You know they are procured by a deliberate series of more complicated villainy (of fraud, robbery and murder) than was ever practised either by Mahometans or Pagans ; in particular by murders of all kinds ; by the blood of the innocent poured upon the ground like water. Now it is your money that pays the merchant, and through him the captain and African butchers. You therefore are guilty : Yea principally guilty, of all these frauds, robberies, and murders. You are the spring that puts all the rest in motion ; they would not stir a step without you---Therefore the blood of all these wretches, who die before their time, whether in their country or elsewhere, lies upon your head. The blood of thy brother (for whether thou wilt believe it or no, such he is in the sight of him that made him) crieth against thee from the earth, from the ship and from the waters. O ! whatever it cost, put a stop to its cry, before it be too late. Instantly, at any price, were it the half of thy goods, deliver thyself from blood guiltiness ! Thy hands, thy bed, thy furniture, thy house, thy land, are at present stained with blood. Surely it is enough ; accumulate

late no more guilt : Spill no more the blood of the innocent ! Do not hire another to shed blood ! Do not pay him for doing it ! Whether thou art a Christian or no, shew thyself a man ; be not more savage than a lion or a bear.

Perhaps thou wilt say, ‘ I do not buy any negroes : I only use those left me by my father.’ But is it enough to satisfy your own conscience ! Had your father, have you, has any living, a right to use another as a slave ! It cannot be, even setting REVELATION aside. It cannot be, that either war or contract, can give any man such a property in another as he has in his sheep and oxen : Much less is it possible, that any child of man, should ever be born a slave. Liberty is the right of every human creature, as soon as he breathes the vital air. And no human law can deprive him of that right, which he derives from the law of nature. If therefore you have any regard to justice, (to say nothing of mercy, nor of the revealed law of God) render unto all their due. Give liberty to whom liberty is due, that is to every child of man, to every partaker of human nature. Let none serve you but by his own act and deed, by his own voluntary choice ; away with whips, chains, and all compulsion. Be gentle towards all men. And see that you invariably do unto every one, as you would he should do unto you.

T H E E N D.





